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ABSTRACT

Whereas the nationwide dropout rate is 27 percent, in Hartford, Connecticut, 39 percent of high school students do not graduate. This factor limits residents' employability in the city's expanding economy. The problem is especially serious among Hispanic students, who comprise 39 percent of Hartford's high school population and account for 47 percent of the dropout group. To address this crisis, the Hartford Board of Education organized representatives of city and state agencies, business, the community, parents, students, and school staff to create the committee whose dropout prevention plan is discussed in this paper. Through bilingual surveys and interviews with recent dropouts, supplemented by former students' files, the committee determined the most common reasons for dropping out: the need for employment or helping out at home, boredom, poor academic progress, and pregnancy. After determining 15 risk factors, the committee developed a screening process requiring that students displaying 2 or more of these factors be closely observed and possibly targeted for specific dropout prevention services. The plan established five objectives: to reduce the annual dropout rate from 11 to 6 percent, to improve potential dropouts' academic performance and self-esteem, to establish a referral mechanism, to continue research into dropout causes and prevention, and to establish an implementation committee. The program will build on existing school system resources and community-based services. The budget will be $1,581,339. Included are 15 exhibits, appendices containing the survey instrument, a list of special responses, and student referral forms, and 14 references. (MLH)

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ED296448

Hartford Public Schools

Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction

November 1, 1987

EA 020 096

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TABLE OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit		Following Page
1.	Hartford Public Schools Pupil Enrollment by School and Grade	5
2.	Racial Composition of Hartford Population, Youths and Public School Enrollees	5
3.	Percentage of Dropouts by Academic Year	6
4.	Yearly Enrollment Rates for a Cohort of High School Students	6
5.	Comparison of Dropout Rates for Hispanic vs. All Other Enrollees	6
6.	Dropouts by Sex	7
7.	Dropouts by Age	7
8.	Dropouts by Grade Level	7
9.	Reasons Given in Survey for Dropping Out	12
10.	Interview Results	13
11.	Reasons Given in Interview for Dropping Out	13
12.	Identification of Students at Risk/Screening Process	20
13.	Assignment of a Student Advocate to Elementary Schools	20
14.	Progression of a Bridge Student from Middle School to Graduation	27
15.	Hartford Dropout Reduction Budget	33

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November 1, 1987

Ms. Antres Buford, Assistant Coordinator
of Dropout Prevention
Hartford Public Schools
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Ms. Buford:

We are pleased to submit this revised version of the Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction.

In order to rewrite your earlier version of the plan, we have met with representatives of the Dropout Prevention Committee, reviewed the professional literature relating to dropping out and interviewed the School System's program evaluation staff. While we have conducted these activities in order to understand the context of the report and more fully to develop some of the points introduced in the original version of the Plan, we do not view ourselves as having developed the Plan itself.

This was and remains very much the Plan of the Dropout Prevention Committee. It is one on which you have worked hard and one which we believe you can be proud of. We have enjoyed working with you and appreciate your support on this important project. Good luck with your Plan implementation. If we can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call upon us.

Very truly yours,

Peat Marwick Main & Co

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section		Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		
I.	UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM	
	A. DROPOUTS IN AMERICA	1
	B. DROPOUTS IN HARTFORD	3
	1. Background	3
	2. Demographic Information	4
	3. Hartford Public Schools	5
	4. Scope of the Problem	5
	5. Addressing the Need	7
II.	THE HARTFORD COMMUNITY PLAN FOR DROPOUT REDUCTION	10
	A. HISTORY	10
	B. RESEARCH AND FINDINGS IN HARTFORD	11
	1. Survey Research	11
	2. Interviews	13
	C. PROFILE OF A STUDENT AT RISK	13
	D. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY DROPOUT PLAN	14
	E. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	15
	F. EVALUATION	31
	G. BUDGET	33
APPENDIX A	Questionnaire Letter Sent to Students	
APPENDIX B	Other Responses to Questionnaire Letter	
APPENDIX C	Student Referral Forms	
REFERENCES		

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit		Following Page
1.	Hartford Public Schools Pupil Enrollment by School and Grade	5
2.	Racial Composition of Hartford Population, Youths and Public School Enrollees	5
3.	Percentage of Dropouts by Academic Year	6
4.	Yearly Enrollment Rates for a Cohort of High School Students	6
5.	Comparison of Dropout Rates for Hispanic vs. All Other Enrollees	6
6.	Dropouts by Sex	7
7.	Dropouts by Age	7
8.	Dropouts by Grade Level	7
9.	Reasons Given in Survey for Dropping Out	12
10.	Interview Results	13
11.	Reasons Given in Interview for Dropping Out	13
12.	Identification of Students at Risk/Screening Process	20
13.	Assignment of a Student Advocate to Elementary Schools	20
14.	Progression of a Bridge Student from Middle School to Graduation	27
15.	Hartford Dropout Reduction Budget	33

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The problem of students dropping out of school has become a crisis throughout the nation. Nationwide 27 percent of high school students do not graduate. Dropouts generally enjoy a lower quality of life, earn less, and are more likely to be unemployed. They cost society money in greater public assistance payments, reduced tax revenues, lowered productivity, higher training costs and increased involvement in crime.

In Hartford, the problem is even more serious. Here almost half again as many (39 percent) of high school students do not graduate when compared with the nation as a whole. The City's Development Plan has cited the high dropout rate as a problem which limits employability of Hartford residents in the expanding Hartford economy. The problem is especially serious among Hispanic students who represent a substantial portion of Hartford's high school population (39 percent in academic year 1985/1986) and who account for a disproportionately high fraction of the dropout population (47 percent in 1985/1986, the most recent year for which figures are available).

In order to address the dropout crisis, the Hartford Board of Education organized representatives of City and State agencies, the business community, the community-at-large, parents, students and school staff to create the Hartford Dropout Prevention Planning Committee. That Committee developed this Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction.

The Plan provided for, as an initial step, continuing research into the causes of dropping out. Through bilingual surveys and interviews of recent dropouts, supplemented by reviews of the files of former students, the Committee determined that the reasons for dropping out in Hartford did not differ greatly from reasons in the nation as a whole. Among the most common reasons are:

- Need for employment
- Boredom/lack of interest
- Need to help at home
- Poor academic progress
- Pregnancy

Based upon their research, the Committee developed fifteen risk factors which individually and in combination could be used to identify students at risk of dropping out. The Committee determined as an initial screening practice that if a student displayed two or more of the factors, he or she would be more closely observed for signs of other factors and targeted for specific dropout prevention services, if appropriate.

This plan establishes five objectives:

- To reduce the annual dropout rate from its current level of 11.5 percent by one percent per year so that it will be six percent five years from now. At that point, roughly 300 fewer students per year will drop out.

- Improve academic performance and self esteem of potential dropouts.

- Establish a mechanism to refer dropouts to appropriate community-based services.

- Continue research into the causes and prevention of dropping out. Modify the Plan, as appropriate.

- Establish a Dropout Reduction Advisory Committee (to replace the Hartford Dropout Reduction Planning Committee) to oversee implementation and administration of the Plan.

The implementation program for the Dropout Reduction Plan entails development of a screening process to identify students at risk early in their education. Teachers at all levels will be trained in the use of this process including both the recognition of risk factors and case disposition. Case disposition will include referral to a student advocate in the elementary schools and an advancement counselor in the high schools. These people will be responsible for training, counseling, referral and delivery of program services.

Program services will build to the maximum extent possible on existing school system resources including, for example, Project Bridge (advanced placement and subsidized internships to develop job skills and provide income), the School-to-Work Program (employment preparation), the Teenage Parents Program (special educational arrangements to accommodate the needs of teenage parents), the Career Beginnings Program (career counseling and summer jobs), and the Academic Failures Project (structured intervention to prevent academic failure).

The Program will also build upon community-based services including summer employment programs, job training, tutorial services, internship programs and bilingual training programs.

All components of the program will be subject to evaluation efforts and appropriate adjustments to the program will be made where indicated.

The total budget for the project is $1,581,339.

I. UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM

A. DROPOUTS IN AMERICA

The problem of high school dropouts has long been a concern of families, educators, school administrators, business leaders, and government officials.

Compared to high school graduates, students who drop out and stay out of school suffer. Dropouts experience lower earnings and higher unemployment rates than high school graduates (Rumberger, 1981). It has been estimated that the unemployment rate for dropouts soon after they leave school is more than twice that of high school graduates of the same age. Full-time workers age 25 or older with 9 to 11 years of education earn over $4,000 less per year than a comparable worker with a high school degree. Furthermore, high school graduates who do not continue to college earn an estimated $200,000 more during their lifetime than dropouts (Pallas, 1986). Dropouts are also more likely to require public assistance than graduates (Levin, 1972) and are more likely to engage in criminal activity (Erlick, 1975).

Consequently, dropouts have an effect on the national economy and the quality of the labor market. It has been estimated that for each dropout, $200,000 will be lost in tax revenues and welfare expenditures during the dropout's lifetime (National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1986). In addition, new employees lacking a complete high school education require greater expenditures for training than high school graduates do. There are also intangible costs to individuals and society such as lowered self esteem and lowered civic pride, respectively.

An estimated 27% of the nation's ninth graders entering school will leave before graduation. This percentage represents one million dropouts per year. The percentage is much higher among low-income, minority youth in urban areas (National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1986). Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans average one to two years less secondary education than Caucasian and Blacks (The National Commission of Employment Policy, 1982).

While Hispanics born in the United States or who use English as their primary language graduate at higher rates than foreign born Hispanics or Hispanics who use Spanish as their primary language (Fine and Rosenberg, 1984; Moore and Pachon, 1985), 45 percent of all Hispanic students who enter kindergarten in the United States will not acquire a high school degree (Moore and Pachon, 1965). Furthermore, Blacks and Hispanics are less likely than Caucasian students to return to complete high school once they have left (Kolstad and Owings, 1986).

In addition to race, other demographic characteristics seem to be related to dropping out. These include sex (men are more likely to drop out than women (Pallas, 1986)), age (older students are more likely to drop out than younger students (Rumberger, 1981)), socioeconomic status (students whose families have a lower socioeconomic status are more likely to drop out than those from families with higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Pallas, 1986)), and whether a student lives in an urban, suburban, or rural setting (students from urban and rural settings have higher dropout rates than those living in suburbs (Peng, 1983)). Finally, students attending public schools are more likely to drop out than students in private schools.

Research has indicated that there may be several reasons for students to drop out of school. Pallas (1986) groups these reasons into three categories: academic performance, social adjustment and early transition into adulthood. Poor academic performance (i.e., grades in school and scores on standardized tests) is one of the best predictors of who will drop out. Students' social adjustment to school can also be used to predict which students will drop out. A student who is rebellious, delinquent and frequently truant is more likely to drop out than a more well behaved student. Finally, students who must assume adult family and work roles (e.g., due to pregnancy or the low income of one's family) during high school are often likely to leave school before graduating.

Rumberger (1981) suggests similar categories of factors associated with dropping out: family background (e.g., socioeconomic status, family size, educational level of parents, etc.), experience in school (e.g., academic performance, relationships with faculty and other students, etc.), and other non-school factors (e.g., pregnancy or marriage, aspirations, local employment opportunities, etc.).

Although many factors are correlated with dropout rates, it is difficult to separate the symptoms from the problem. For example, Stephenson (1985) has suggested that while students who are retained in a grade one or more years are more likely to drop out than students who are not retained, students with little interest in school are likely to achieve less academically, therefore causing them to be retained, leading to a high likelihood of their dropping out.

B. DROPOUTS IN HARTFORD

1. Background

Hartford's economic structure is based on a concentration of high growth industries (such as banking, insurance, and real estate). This growth has led to higher employment, increased capital expenditure and improved opportunities in the City.

Nevertheless, 1980 census data indicate that Hartford is the fourth poorest city in the United States and that 25 percent of the residents of Hartford are at or below the national poverty level. The labor pool in Hartford is not keeping pace with the job opportunities in the labor market, because the labor pool requires a higher level of education. The implications for City residents are that they must improve their education levels and become adaptable to various employment opportunities.

The City of Hartford Office of Planning developed a report, Hartford Economics and Employment Component: Comprehensive Plan of Development, 1984, describing Hartford's economy and proposing recommendations to change the City's economy to the benefit of its residents, the business community, and those using the City for recreational purposes. One of the conclusions of that report was that:

> Education and job training are essential to preparing a City labor force which is attractive to employers. The strategies associated with education and job training will necessitate local, state and metropolitan involvement; and most of all, the personal commitment of parents and students to excel. Reduction of the ... high school drop-

out rate and the graduation of students prepared to live in a rapidly changing urban society will determine how the future work force prospers.

It is essential that education and training programs equip prospective employees to be qualified job candidates. To that end, the City of Hartford has made it a policy to:

> Ensure that the Board of Education honors its responsibility to produce educated employable graduates who can read and write English and have proficiency in basic life skills,...[and to]...facilitate employment of its unemployed and underemployed by providing training programs for career development and information on job opportunities and placement.

2. Demographic Information

Based on census data, the population of the City of Hartford in 1980 was 136,392. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management (December 1984) predicted approximately the same figure for 1985 (136,395), while predicting an increase in the population of about 2,000 persons by 1990.

In 1980, census data indicated 35,990 school age children (age 5 to 19 years) in Hartford. The Connecticut Office of Policy and Management estimated a decrease in that figure to 32,108 by 1985, with a slight recovery to 32,929 by 1990. Fifty-one percent of the youths in this age group are male while forty-nine percent are female.

Of the 1,872 Hartford residents under age 22 who, as of June 30, 1987 were active registrants with the Connecticut Job Service (Connecticut Department of Labor, July, 1987), 31 percent had finished 12 or more years of school, while 65 percent had completed only some high school.

Of these youths, 49 percent are Hispanic and 45 percent are black. Less than 5 percent are Caucasian. Nearly 33 percent receive public assistance.

Registrants with the Connecticut Job Service include all those receiving unemployment compensation as well as some individuals who are employed but may be seeking alternate employment.

3. Hartford Public Schools

There are 30 schools in the Hartford public school system (see Exhibit 1 for a list of schools with corresponding enrollment figures for the 1985/1986 academic year): 25 elementary schools (five of these also include seventh and eighth grades), two middle schools (seventh and eighth grades) and three high schools (ninth through twelfth grades). As of October 1, 1986, there were 24,289 students enrolled in Hartford schools (including 607 enrolled in special programs such as the Special Education Learning Center, Moylan, and the Teenage Parent Program). There were also 726 students enrolled in Project Concern, a regional program developed in 1966 to provide an alternate educational opportunity for students. In addition to the students listed above, there are 1,350 students enrolled in Adult Education.

Exhibit 2 presents the racial composition of the City's population, youths aged five to 17 years, and students enrolled in Hartford Public Schools. Although almost five out of ten residents of Hartford are Caucasian, only one of ten school children is Caucasian. Conversely, nine out of ten students are nonwhite. The nonwhite students are about evenly divided among Blacks and Hispanics, despite the fact that Blacks greatly outnumber Hispanics in the population at large. Furthermore, although two out of ten youths are Caucasian, only one of ten Hartford Public School students is Caucasian, indicating that Caucasians may be finding alternative education. Conversely, although Hispanics represent only two of ten residents in the City, they represent almost five of ten students, suggesting that Hispanic families may be younger, have larger families, and are less likely to seek alternatives to public education than their caucasian counterparts.

4. Scope of the Problem

The Hartford Public School System defines a dropout as a student who discontinues his or her education program prior to graduation and does not enroll in another education program. Students who transfer to other school systems or

Hartford Public Schools
Pupil Enrollment by School and Grade

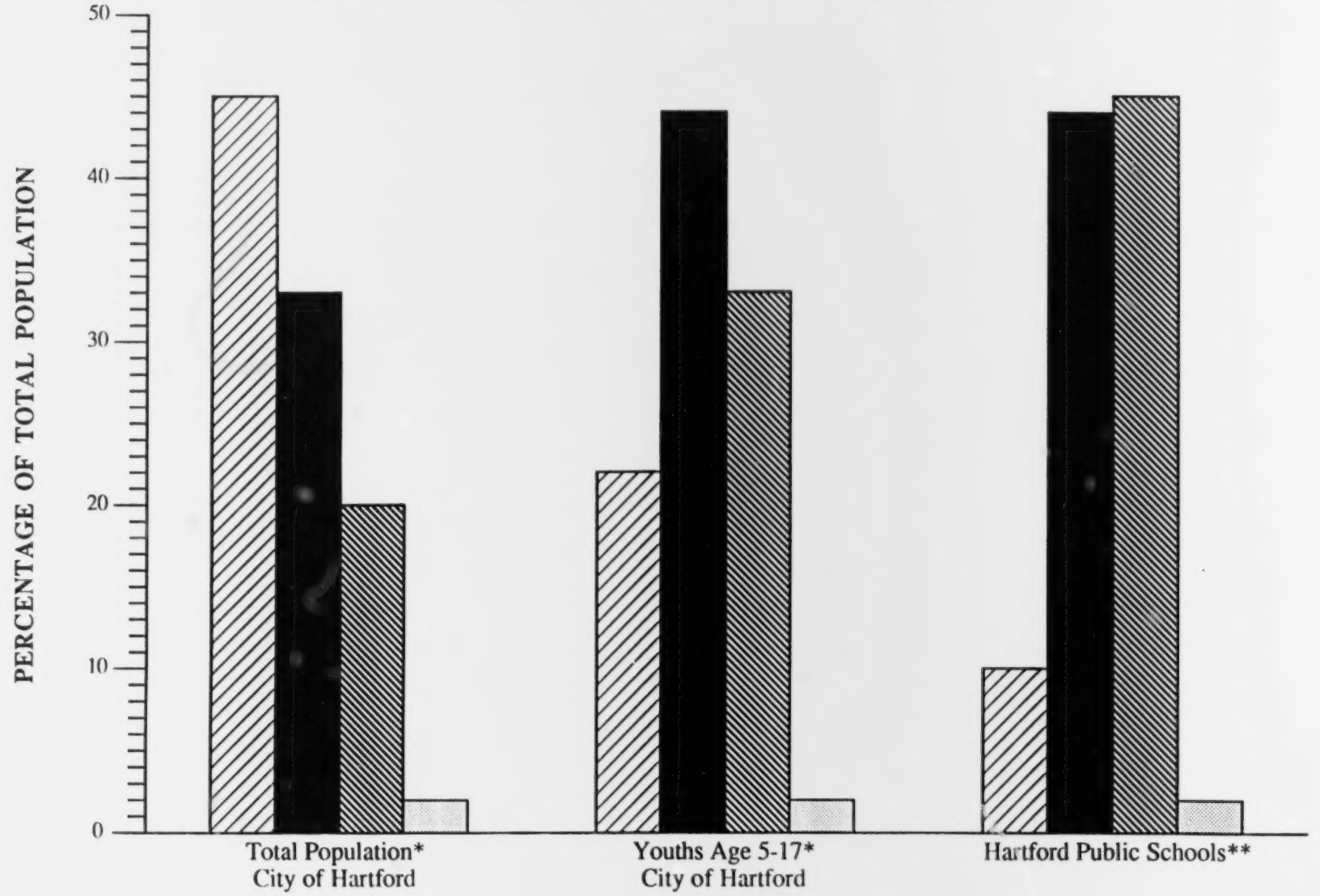
Elementary Schools (Pre-K - Grade 6)	October 1, 1986 Enrollment
Barbour	287
Barnard-Brown	680
Batchelder*	493
Betances	498
Burns	929
Burr*	565
Clark	688
Dwight	361
Fisher	593
Fox Elementary*	1,211
Hooker	859
Kennelly*	578
King	1,126
Kinsella	650
McDonough	648
Naylor*	518
Parkville	685
Rawson	422
Sand	751
Simpson-Waverly	548
Twain	423
Vine	694
Webster	413
West Middle	686
Wish	554
Pre-schools	377
Total Elementary Schools	16,237
Middle Schools (Grades 7 and 8)	
Fox Middle	1,021
Quirk Middle	1,225
Total Middle Schools	2,246
High Schools (Grades 9-12)	
Bulkeley	1,649
Hartford Public High School	1,854
Weaver	1,696
Total High Schools	5,199
Special Programs (SELC, TAPP, & Moylan)	607
Total Enrollment	24,289

*This school includes 7th and 8th grades as well.

Note: Total does not include 726 students enrolled in Project Concern, nor does it include 1,350 students enrolled in Adult Education.

Exhibit 2

RACIAL COMPOSITION OF POPULATION, YOUTHS AND PUBLIC SCHOOL ENROLLEES



*Figures based on 1980 census data
**Figures based on October 1, 1986 school system enrollment data

alternative education programs are not considered dropouts, while students who leave school to take a job or enter military service are considered dropouts. The dropout figure developed is an annual figure which includes only those students who have dropped out in a given school year.

Although dropout rates are computed differently among different school districts, Hartford appears to have a higher dropout rate than the national rate. As of June 30, 1986, 613 students (of a total 5,331) in grades nine through twelve were reported to have withdrawn from school and were not known to be entering another formal school system. This figure represents 11.5 percent of the total enrollment. Exhibit 3 presents the last nine dropout rates for the Hartford Public School System. After peaking in 1981/82, rates have subsided, due largely to attention devoted to the problem by the school board and administration.

An example will help demonstrate the serious implications of the Hartford dropout problem. School records currently do not allow tracking of cohorts through a four or five year time period. However, using the dropout figures for four academic years, one can estimate the number of students who will not have dropped out at the end of a four-year period.

Exhibit 4 tracks the Class of 1986 from its enrollment in September, 1982 until June, 1986. The exhibit shows the typical pattern of maximum dropout occurring in ninth grade and progressively lower rates through twelfth grade. Hartford's four-year dropout rate (percentage of a cohort dropping out in any four-year period) of approximately 39 percent is substantially greater than the national average of 27 percent.

Research described below has shown that among other things, race is related to the Hartford dropout rate. In Hartford, as in the nation as a whole, Hispanic students leave school at a greater rate than either Caucasian or Black students. As shown in Exhibit 5, Hispanic students had the highest dropout rate, with 14 percent of all Hispanic students enrolled as of October 1, 1985 leaving school by June 30, 1986. Exhibit 5 also demonstrates that Hispanic students have dropped out at a greater rate than all other racial or ethnic groups combined for the past five academic years. Furthermore, Hispanic students are dropping out in numbers disproportionate to their representation in the school system's

Percentage of Dropouts by Academic Year

Exhibit 3

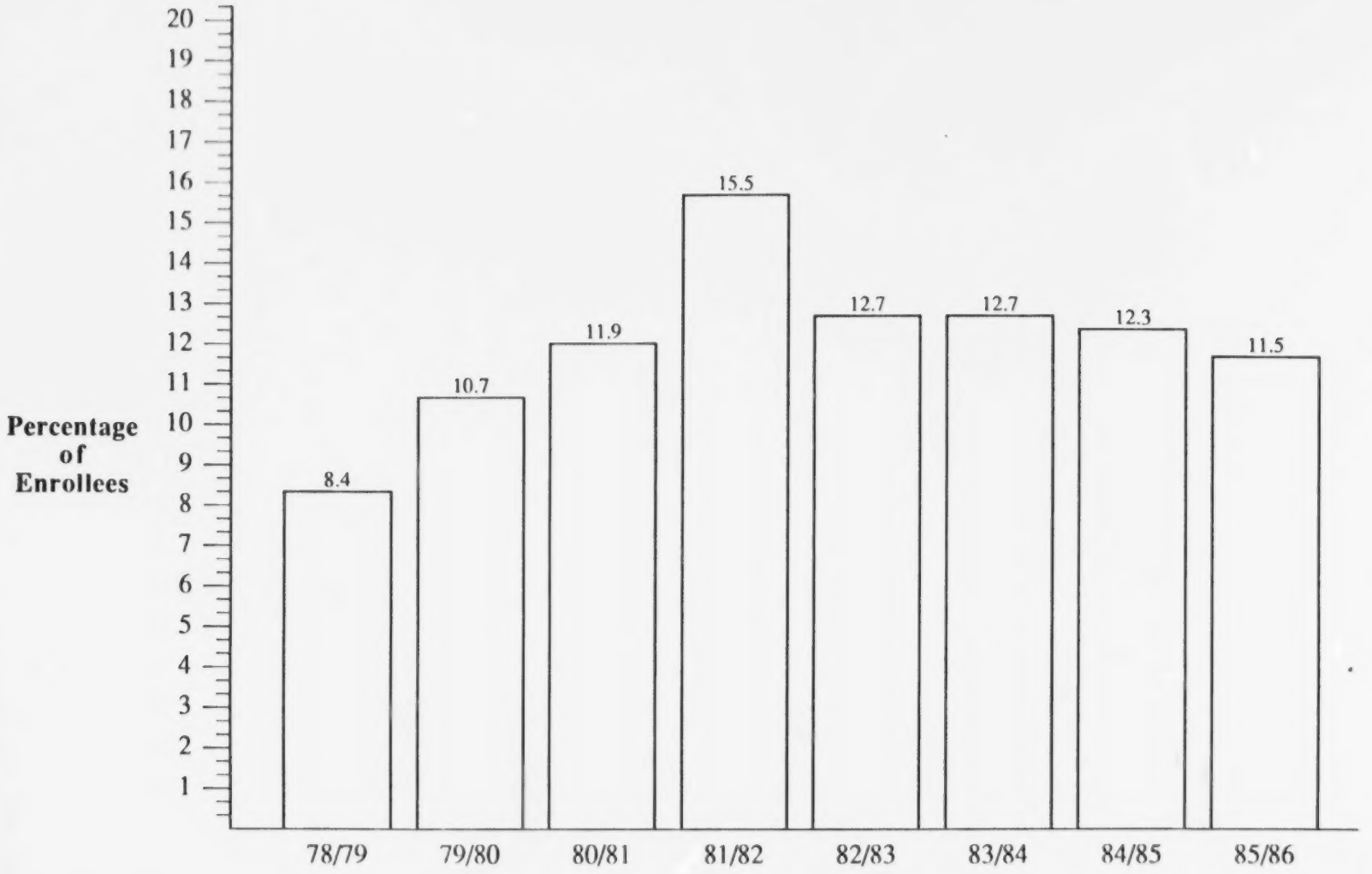


Exhibit 4

YEARLY ENROLLMENT RATES FOR A HYPOTHETICAL COHORT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

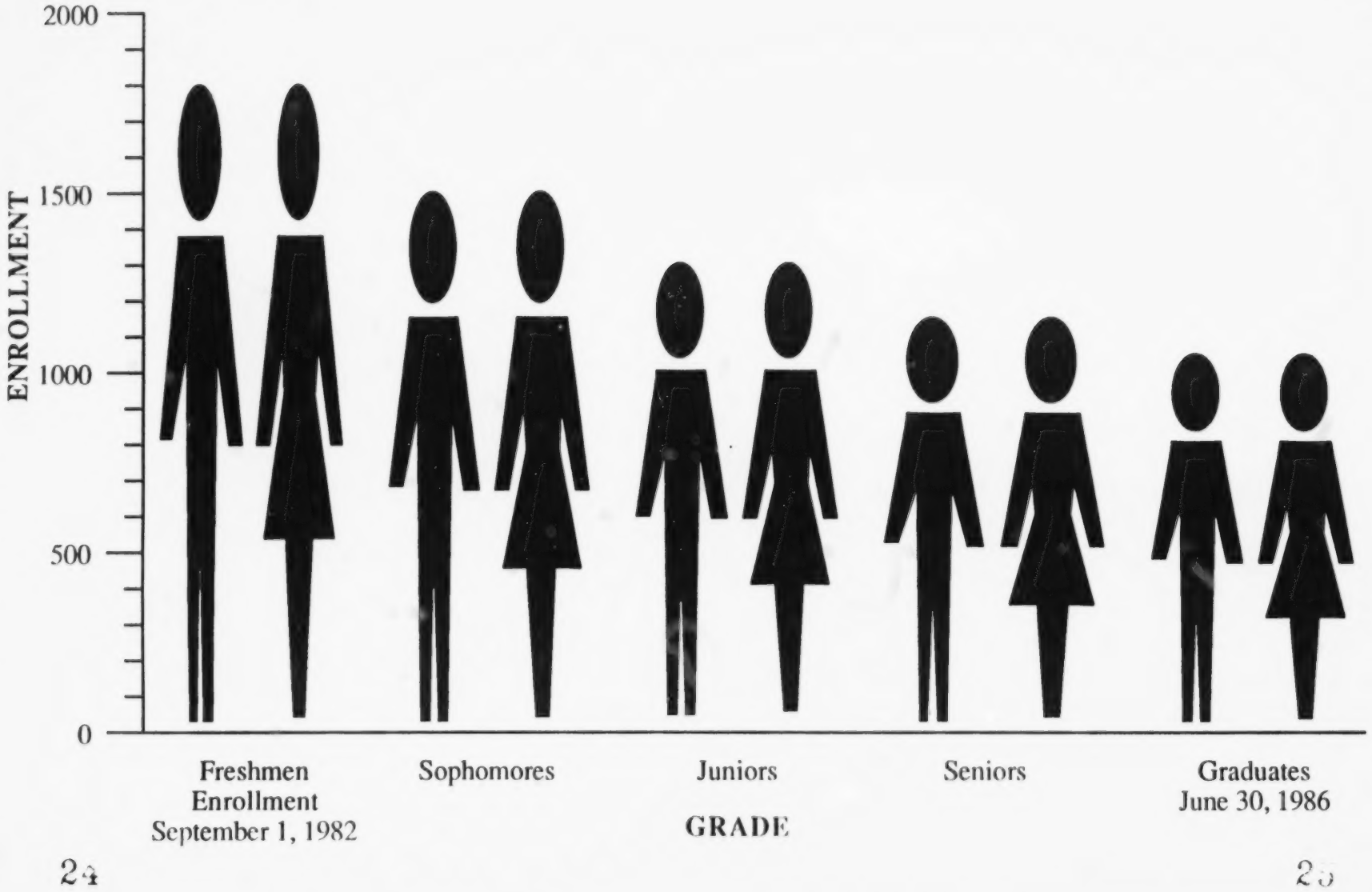
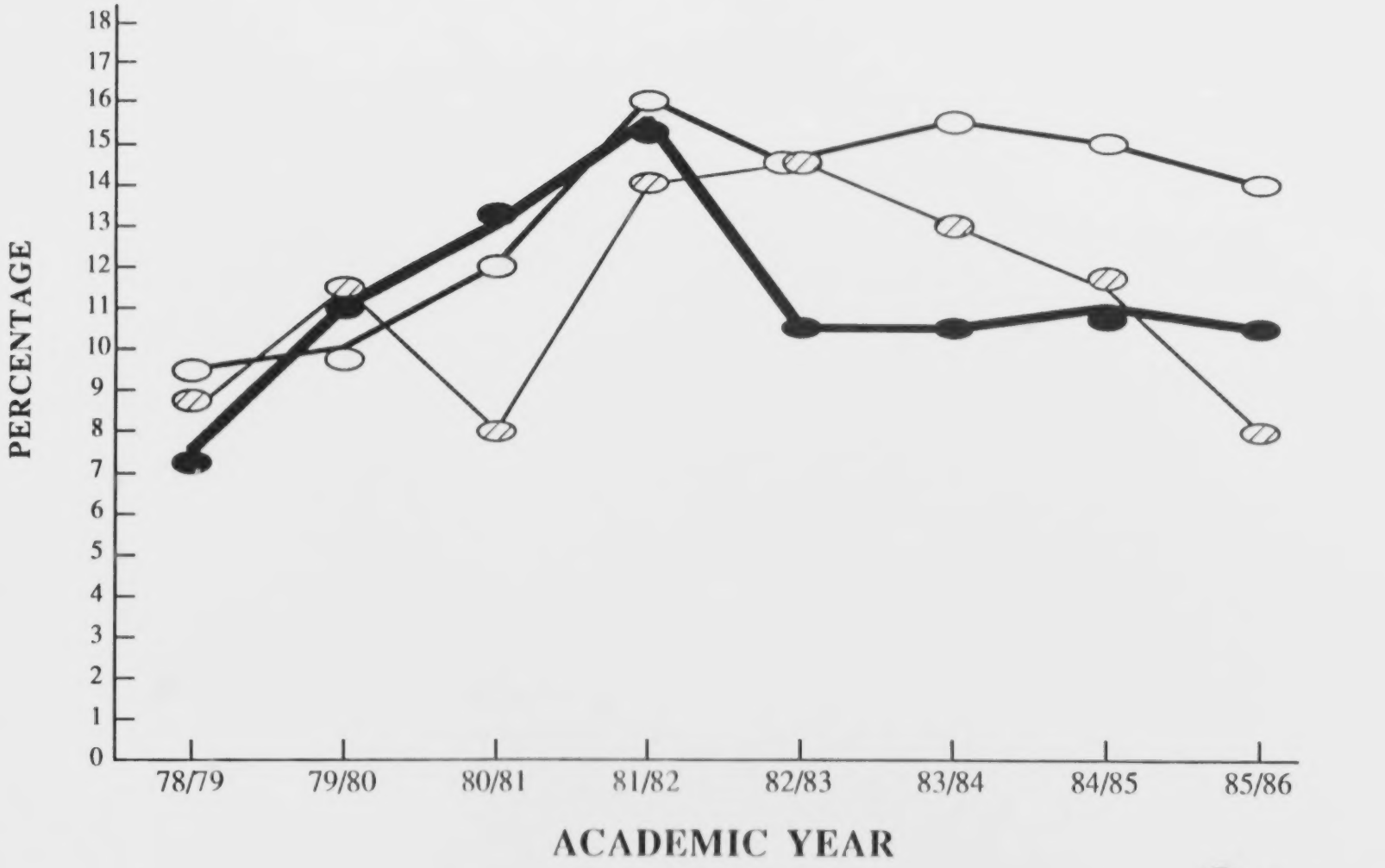


Exhibit 5

COMPARISON OF DROPOUT RATES FOR BLACK, CAUCASIAN, AND HISPANIC ENROLLEES



Note: Percentages refer to the percentages of enrollees of a given racial group who have dropped out.

population. (48 percent of dropouts vs. 39 percent of students in 1985/86, the most recent year for which dropout statistics are available.)

The Hartford Public School System has collected data on the race of dropouts since the 1978/1979 academic year. Data was also collected regarding certain other demographic characteristics (i.e., sex, age, and grade level), as was the reason for a student dropping out. This data is summarized in Exhibits 6 through 8.

The reasons students leave school are recorded in the students' files. For well over two-thirds of the students during both academic years, faculty did not know why the student left and the student did not indicate that they were leaving. Therefore, "non-attendance" or "over 16--no reason given" was recorded as the reason for leaving. Of those students for whom a faculty member knew the reason for leaving, the need for a job was the most common explanation (10 percent of the dropouts in both academic years had this indicated in their files). No other response approached this response in frequency.

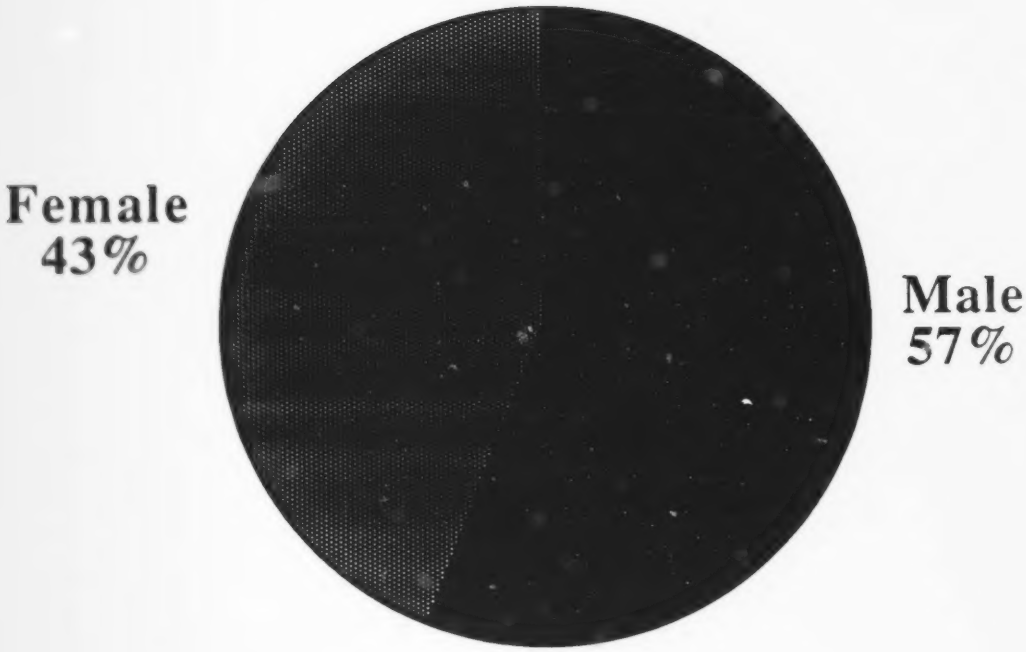
5. Addressing the Need

The Hartford Board of Education recognizes the severity of the dropout problem in Hartford. It is working to reduce the number of students who drop out of school and to establish a network of services to assist those students who do, in fact, drop out. The Board of Education organized representatives of City and State agencies, the business community, the community-at-large, parents, students, and school staff to plan and conduct a symposium exploring the problems and to identify possible solutions. The symposium resulted in the formation of the Hartford Dropout Prevention Planning Committee. Through its efforts, this Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction was developed.

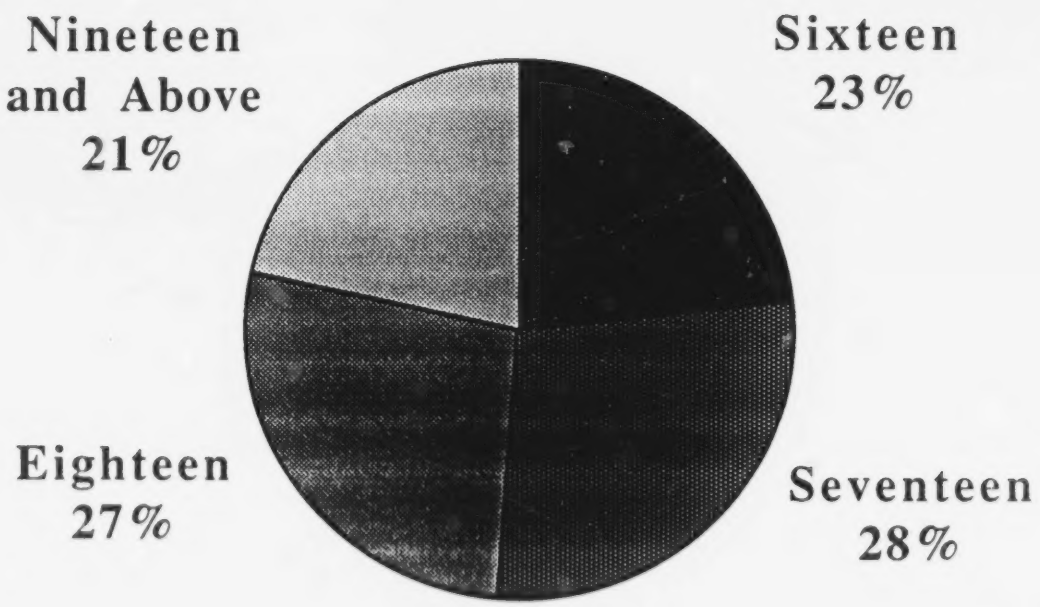
The plan seeks to address the alarming problem of the Hartford dropout rate by:

- exploring further the needs of Hartford dropouts and students at risk of dropping out of school;
- researching the causes for Hartford students dropping out;

DROPOUTS BY SEX
(1985/86)

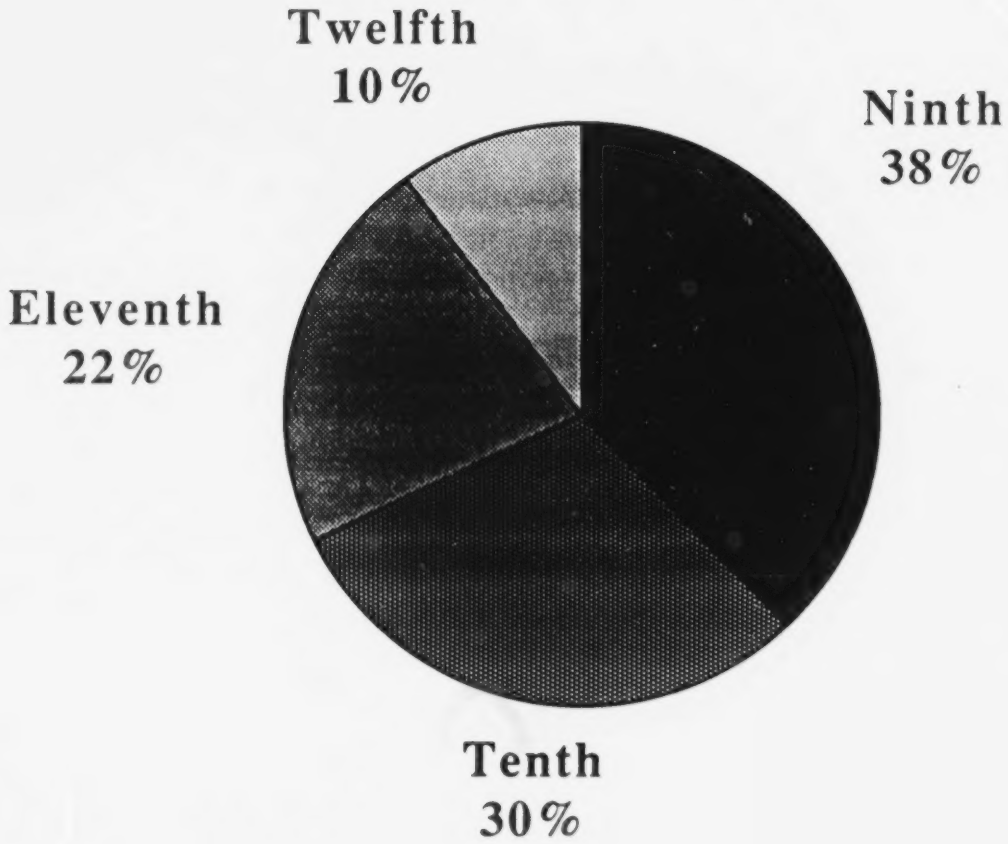


DROPOUTS BY AGE*
(1985/86)



*Does not sum to 100% because of rounding.

DROPOUTS BY GRADE LEVEL* (1985/86)



*High School only

- identifying the services existing in the schools and/or community to provide dropout prevention and intervention;
- identifying and addressing the gap, if any, that exists between services for dropouts or students at risk and their needs, (identified through research) which prevent them from staying in school or returning to school;
- evaluating the success of the programs which exist or will be implemented;
- monitoring the programs; and
- increasing community awareness of the problem and participation in the plan.

The plan responds to identified causes of dropping out, including dissatisfaction with schools, boredom and lack of interest. To this end, it builds upon and incorporates research conducted through the Connecticut School Effectiveness Project which is a State approved program presently being implemented in the high school system. The components of an effective school have been identified as follows:

a. Safe and Orderly Environment

There is an orderly atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm or intimidation and is conducive to teaching and learning.

b. Strong Instructional Leadership

The principal acts as the instructional leader who effectively communicates the mission of the school to staff, parents and students and who understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in working with the school communities.

c. High Expectations

The school displays a climate of expectation in which the staff believes and demonstrates that students can reach extended levels of achievement and that they (the staff) have the capacity and responsibility to deliver the required instructional program.

d. Clear School Mission

There is a clearly-articulated mission of the school through which the staff shares an understanding and commitment to instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability.

e. Opportunities to Learn and Time on Task

A significant amount of schooltime is devoted to providing opportunities for direct student participation in learning activity. Instructional time on task is observed, monitored, and modified by school staff.

f. Frequent Monitoring of Pupil Progress

Pupil progress is frequently monitored through several methods ranging from traditional practices of teacher-made testing to use of sophisticated methods of criterion referenced or standardized evaluations.

g. Parental and Community Involvement

The staff seeks to bring parents into a co-active role in achieving the instructional goals of the school.

II. THE HARTFORD COMMUNITY PLAN FOR DROPOUT REDUCTION

A. HISTORY

Concern about the excessive numbers of students leaving school prompted the Hartford Board of Education to vote on August 27, 1985 to sponsor a symposium to explore the problems relating to dropouts and to identify possible solutions. Recognizing that the dropout problem affects the entire community, the Board sought the cooperation of representatives of City and State agencies, the business community, the community-at-large, parents, students, and school staff to be involved in planning and conducting the symposium.

On October 30, 1985, approximately 135 participants representing a broad cross section of the Hartford educational, corporate, social, and political community met for a full-day session to discuss the dropout problem. The symposium reconvened on February 26, 1986, to review the summary report from the first session and to develop more specific suggestions for a dropout reduction plan. One result of the symposium was the organization of the Hartford Dropout Prevention Planning Committee.

The Hartford Dropout Prevention Planning Committee is composed of representatives from City, State and community agencies, the corporate community, parents and former dropouts. It includes representatives from:

- Hartford Board of Education/Hartford Public Schools
- Connecticut General Assembly (member of the Hartford delegation)
- Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce
- City of Hartford Department of Social Services
- University of Connecticut School of Social Work
- City of Hartford Office of Youth Services
- Hartford Adult Education Program
- La Casa de Puerto Rico
- National Puerto Rican Forum.

A former Hartford City Council member, parents and former dropouts also participate in the Planning Committee.

The Planning Committee recognized that much work was needed to determine the reasons why students leave school prior to graduation and wanted to direct its efforts at causes rather than symptoms. The Planning Committee participants were encouraged to delve into the origins of the dropout dilemma and to work cooperatively with school and community staffs to develop a plan of action which would have measurable results that could be monitored and evaluated, and have elements of responsibility and accountability.

Since its organization, the Planning Committee has engaged in the following activities:

- Developed a statistical report which identified those students enrolled during the 1985-1986 academic year who left school before the end of the year or who did not return in September 1986.
- Surveyed as many dropouts from 1985-1986 as could be located as to their reasons for dropping out.
- Conducted interviews with Hispanics who had dropped out and who responded to the above survey to further explore the reasons for dropping out.
- Compiled a report on the research results described below).
- Developed a dropout prevention plan (a draft of which was adopted by the Hartford Board of Education on February 26, 1987) to address the needs of potential dropouts, dropouts, and students at risk.

B. RESEARCH AND FINDINGS IN HARTFORD

1. Survey Research

During the fall and winter of the 1986-1987 academic year, the Committee conducted research to investigate the reasons why students leave school. This research was funded by a Ford Foundation grant with technical assistance from Hunter College. Six hundred thirteen students out of a total public high school enrollment of 5,331 in grades nine through twelve were identified as dropouts during the 1985-1986 academic year. Two-sided letters (in both English and Spanish) were sent to all dropouts for whom addresses were available (See Appendix A for a copy of the letter). Each letter explained to the youth that his or her name had appeared on a list of students who had dropped out that year, and that the Board of Education was concerned that he or she may not be receiving the benefits of all the community services available. The former student was

encouraged to contact the Assistant Coordinator for Dropout Prevention if he or she needed help returning to school or if he or she wanted a list of available community services. Finally, the former student was provided with a checklist of possible reasons why he or she dropped out of school and was asked to indicate all the appropriate reasons why he or she left school early. Included on the checklist as reasons were:

- Dissatisfaction with teachers
- Dislike of school in general
- Lack of credits
- Dislike of school previously attended
- Boredom or lack of interest
- Pregnancy
- Desire for alternative education
- Moved to another city or state
- Marriage
- The need for employment
- The need to help at home.

If the former student's reason for leaving was not included in the list, he or she was asked to write it on the survey (Appendix B contains a list of these other responses). Finally, the former students were asked to return the survey to the Assistant Coordinator for Dropout Prevention and were provided with her address.

Out of the 613 identified dropouts, 426 were contacted. One hundred-eighty-seven former students could not be contacted because their addresses were not available. Surveys were mailed to 355 former students while 71 Hispanic former students were approached to participate in interviews. Ninety (25 percent) surveys were returned. Exhibit 9 displays the percentage of respondents indicating each reason for dropping out. The most frequent reason given for dropping out was economic: the student was in need of employment. The second most frequent response was boredom or lack of interest. Third was the need to help at home. Fourth was a lack of academic credits and fifth was pregnancy (16 percent of the female dropouts who responded cited this reason). Twenty-six percent wrote in other reasons for dropping out including some which were very similar to the reasons listed (e.g., "having to pay child support" and "having to support my-

Exhibit 9

REASONS GIVEN IN SURVEY FOR DROPPING OUT

Reason Given for Dropping Out	Percentage
Need a job/work	54.4
Boredom/lack of interest	26.7
Need to help at home	22.2
Lack of credits	20.0
Pregnancy	16.7
Dissatisfied with teachers	14.4
Dislike of school in general	13.3
Dislike of school last attended	10.0
Desire for alternative education	0.6
Marriage	0.5
Moved to another city or state	0.2
Others	25.5

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 because more than one response could have been chosen.

self"). Other responses included "running with the wrong crowd," "taking my mother to appointments," and "having a serious operation."

2. Interviews

As described above, 71 Hispanic students were approached and asked if they would consent to be interviewed to provide information as to why they dropped out. Sixty-two former students responded and nine did not. Exhibits 10 and 11 present the interview results.

C. PROFILE OF A STUDENT AT RISK

As a result of this research and through a review of the literature, several potential indicators of students at risk of dropping out of school were identified. An independent study by the Hartford school system regarding academic failure also identified many of the same indicators. Students exhibiting two or more of the following characteristics can be identified as being at risk:

- Poor attendance (current school policy is such that a student who misses more than 20 days per year will lose all credit for that academic year).
- Discipline problems.
- Alienation.
- Poor achievement (i.e., performing one or more years below one's grade level).
- Not realizing potential.
- Age inappropriate.
- Multiple grade retentions.
- Family history (e.g., the student's parents or siblings did not complete high school).
- Financial need.
- Student indication of intention to leave school.
- Language problems (i.e., lack of facility in English).
- Pregnancy or early parenthood.
- Negative self image.
- Family dysfunction.
- Family crisis (e.g., death or divorce).

Exhibit 10

INTERVIEW RESULTS

Sex:	Female	52%
	Male	47%
Language at Home:	English	65%
	Spanish	19%
	Both	16%
Language with Friends:	English	79%
	Spanish	5%
	Both	15%
Age:	Eighteen	31%
	Nineteen	32%
	Twenty	17%
	Other	20%
Grade at Dropout:	Ninth	19%
	Tenth	37%
	Eleventh	26%
	Twelfth	19%
High School:	Hartford Public	57%
	Bulkeley	37%
	Weaver	6%
Attendance:	Irregular or Not at All:	68%
Home Situation:	Both Parents	40%
	Mother Only	40%
	Father Only	6%
Encouraged to Leave School:		35%
Encouraged to Stay in School:		68%
Parents' Education:	Mother Graduated	36%
	Father Graduated	36%
Help with Homework	Faculty, Staff, Tutor	49%
	Family or Friends	16%
	No Help	39%

Exhibit 11

REASONS GIVEN IN INTERVIEW FOR DROPPING OUT

Reason Given for Dropping Out	Percentage
Boredom/lack of interest	37
Needed to work	26
Disliked school in general	16
Pregnancy	16
Disliked teachers	15
Too few credits	11
Disliked specific school attended	11

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 because more than one response could have been chosen.

D. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY DROPOUT PLAN

The goal of the Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction as identified by the Hartford Dropout Reduction Planning Committee is to establish a framework for the coordination of existing and potential resources for the express purpose of reducing the dropout rate in the City of Hartford through preventive measures, and providing services to those who do, in fact, drop out.

Outlined below are the specific objectives of the Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction.

Objective A

For each of the next five years (beginning in September of 1987) the prevention component of the Hartford community dropout plan will reduce the dropout rate by one percent. Achievement of this goal would mean a ten percent reduction in the number of students dropping out per year. This will mean that between 50 and 60 fewer students will leave school each year for five years, and that five years from now, between 250 and 300 fewer students per year will be leaving school than is now the case.

Objective B

The prevention activities implemented as a result of the Hartford Community Dropout Plan are also expected to lead to improved academic performance, improved attendance patterns, and decreased disciplinary referrals among students identified as being potential dropouts or otherwise at risk.

Objective C

The Hartford Dropout Reduction Planning Committee will establish a mechanism whereby students who drop out are referred to a community-based organization for appropriate services. Where a gap is seen between dropout needs and existing services, new services will be implemented to address those needs, given the availability of funding.

Objective D

The Hartford Dropout Reduction Planning Committee will continue to conduct research to determine the actual reasons for students dropping out of school. The results of the research will be incorporated into any future modifications which may be called for in the dropout plan.

Objective E

The Hartford Dropout Reduction Planning Committee will establish a Dropout Reduction Task Force which will oversee implementation of all activities adopted in the dropout plan and make periodic progress reports to the Hartford Board of Education through the Superintendent of Schools. The Hartford Planning Committee upon implementation of the dropout plan, will become the Hartford Dropout Reduction Task Force (Collaborative).

E. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

This section of the plan describes the programs which will be used to implement the objectives. The programs were developed based on the research results which were described earlier.

Objective A

The first objective of the Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction is to decrease the dropout rate by one percent every year for the next five years resulting in a dropout rate of roughly six percent by the end of that period. At this point, the dropout rate will have been reduced to roughly half its current level. The steps with which to implement this objective are described below.

1. Initiate a process at all grade levels for the early identification and screening of students at risk.

   A list was provided above describing the 15 characteristics of students at risk. Students identified as exhibiting two or more of the characteristics will be observed more closely than others for additional indications of potentially dropping out.

The characteristics can be measured both quantitatively and qualitatively as follows:

- Student intention. If the student gives a verbal indication of the intention to leave school, this should not be treated lightly. The student will be monitored closely for signs of other indications that he or she will be leaving school.

- Poor attendance. The current policy regarding the number of allowable absences is that a student may miss no more than twenty days per year. If a student exceeds the limit, he or she loses all academic credits for the school year. Students will be monitored so that those who are approaching the maximum number of allowable absences are identified before it is too late, and credit is lost for all the work accomplished to date. For example, students who are absent three consecutive days or five nonconsecutive days in a marking period will be identified as having poor attendance. They may then be counseled regarding their absences and encouraged to attend school regularly.

- Financial need. A student who frequently indicates to teachers or friends the need to earn money may be exhibiting warning signals that he or she will be leaving school to seek employment.

- Discipline. Students with two or more office referrals during one marking period will be identified as students with disciplinary problems.

- Alienation. Students will be identified as alienated based on faculty observation and anecdotal evidence of social isolation. Survey instruments may also be available which will provide a quantitative measure of social isolation.

- Achievement. Students with poor grades (e.g., failing in three or more subjects in a given marking period), or who are performing one to two years below their grade level, will be identified as exhibiting low academic achievement.

- Not realizing potential. A student who has been identified by teachers or standardized test scores as someone who can perform well but who consistently has poor grades.

- Age inappropriate. Students who, for one of many possible reasons, are overage for their grade level will be identified as age inappropriate.

- Multiple grade retentions. Students who have been retained twice or more will be identified as exhibiting this characteristic.

- Family history. If a student has siblings who also dropped out, or parents who did not complete school, the student may be at risk as well.

- Language problem. A student's lack of facility in English poses a barrier to learning. Students who are having difficulty with English or who have scored poorly on a language proficiency test will be monitored so that they may receive extra help.

- Teenage pregnancy/parenthood. Students who must assume adult roles early are more likely to drop out of school than other students of the same age. Students who are becoming parents or who are parents will be monitored for evidence of other signs of leaving school.

- Negative self image. Qualitatively, students who seem to exhibit a low self image and lack of self respect will be considered to exhibit a characteristic of a student at risk. Quantitatively, research instruments exist which will measure

self esteem. Not only would the administration of such an instrument help in the identification of students exhibiting low self esteem, but pretest and posttest scores on such an instrument could help in the evaluation of dropout prevention programs designed to improve students' self esteem. Research has demonstrated a relationship between low self esteem and pregnancy and/or substance abuse. Improving the self esteem or self image of students will reduce the likelihood of students leaving school for these reasons.

- Family dysfunction. This characteristic can be documented through the records of such agencies as the Connecticut Department of Children and Youth Services or the State criminal justice system.

- Family Crisis. Students with personal and family problems such as substance abuse, death, illness, or divorce will be monitored for other warning signs of students at risk.

A scale is being developed by the school system evaluation staff which will allow greater emphasis to be placed upon the more important characteristics. Based on national data and the data from student files of those students who have actually dropped out of school as compared to those who have not, a prediction equation will be developed to weigh each characteristic according to how strongly the student exhibits each and how highly correlated with dropping out of school the characteristic is.

A standard training program will be developed, and faculty at every grade level will receive extensive training in identifying students exhibiting one or more of the above characteristics. Teachers are currently trained to identify those students who require special education, and a similar process will be developed to identify students at risk (see Appendix A for examples of referral forms). Teachers will become familiar with identifiers and criteria for determining which students are exhibiting the characteristics.

It is also possible that students will be referred as being at risk by a family member, staff from community agencies, school staff, or him or herself. Whoever refers the student will be required to indicate the reasons for referral (i.e., describe the characteristics that the student exhibits). The referral will be sent to an assigned dropout prevention staff person whose responsibilities will be to coordinate all dropout prevention services.

The key staff person in the elementary school dropout prevention program will be a "student advocate." In the high schools, the staff person will be an "advancement counselor." The student advocate/advancement counselor will perform the following services:

- Provide in-service training to all teachers regarding the characteristics of students at risk.
- Establish a screening process whereby students are screened by a teacher and/or the student advocate/advancement counselor to determine those students who are at risk and refer them to the school's student at risk screening committees.
- Chair the school's student at risk screening committees.
- Monitor the recommendations made by the student at risk screening committees regarding individual students.
- Provide direct counseling services to 100 to 125 students identified as being at risk.
- Identify gaps in services and programs to meet the needs of students at risk and make recommendations to fill the gaps.
- Establish and/or improve the lines of communication between the parents of students at risk and the school.

Once a student has been referred as being at risk, his or her principal will convene a student at risk screening committee. The composition of the committee will depend on the case being reviewed. Included on the committee will be the student's teacher, guidance counselor (if the student is in grade seven through twelve), administrator and parent(s). If appropriate, it will also include the school psychologist, social worker, nurse, and so forth.

The committee will gather information on each case, analyze the information, and, based on a set of criteria previously listed as characteristics of students at risk (with a weighting factor applied appropriately to each characteristic), will determine what course of action will help the student remain in school.

The screening committee can take the following actions:

- Decide that the student is not a potential dropout, but needs support services (e.g., counseling, special education, health services, etc.).
- Decide that the committee needs additional information.
- Identify the student to be a potential dropout, and make recommendations as to appropriate dropout prevention services.

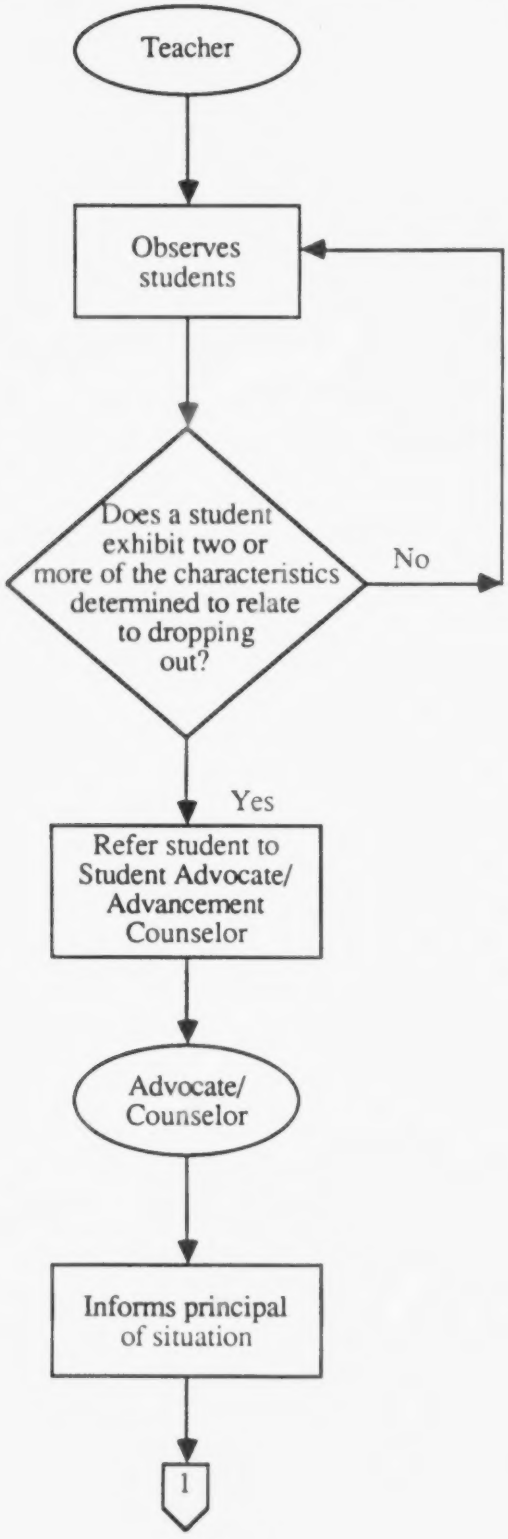
The committee will continue to meet on an as needed basis, to monitor the progress of the student. However, the student advocate/ advancement counselor will have the ultimate responsibility of implementing and monitoring the screening committee's recommendations.

Exhibit 12 presents a flow chart of the screening process.

It is essential that the screening process occur at all grade levels. Often it is too late to help students in high school, so elementary school staff persons will be essential to the success of the plan.

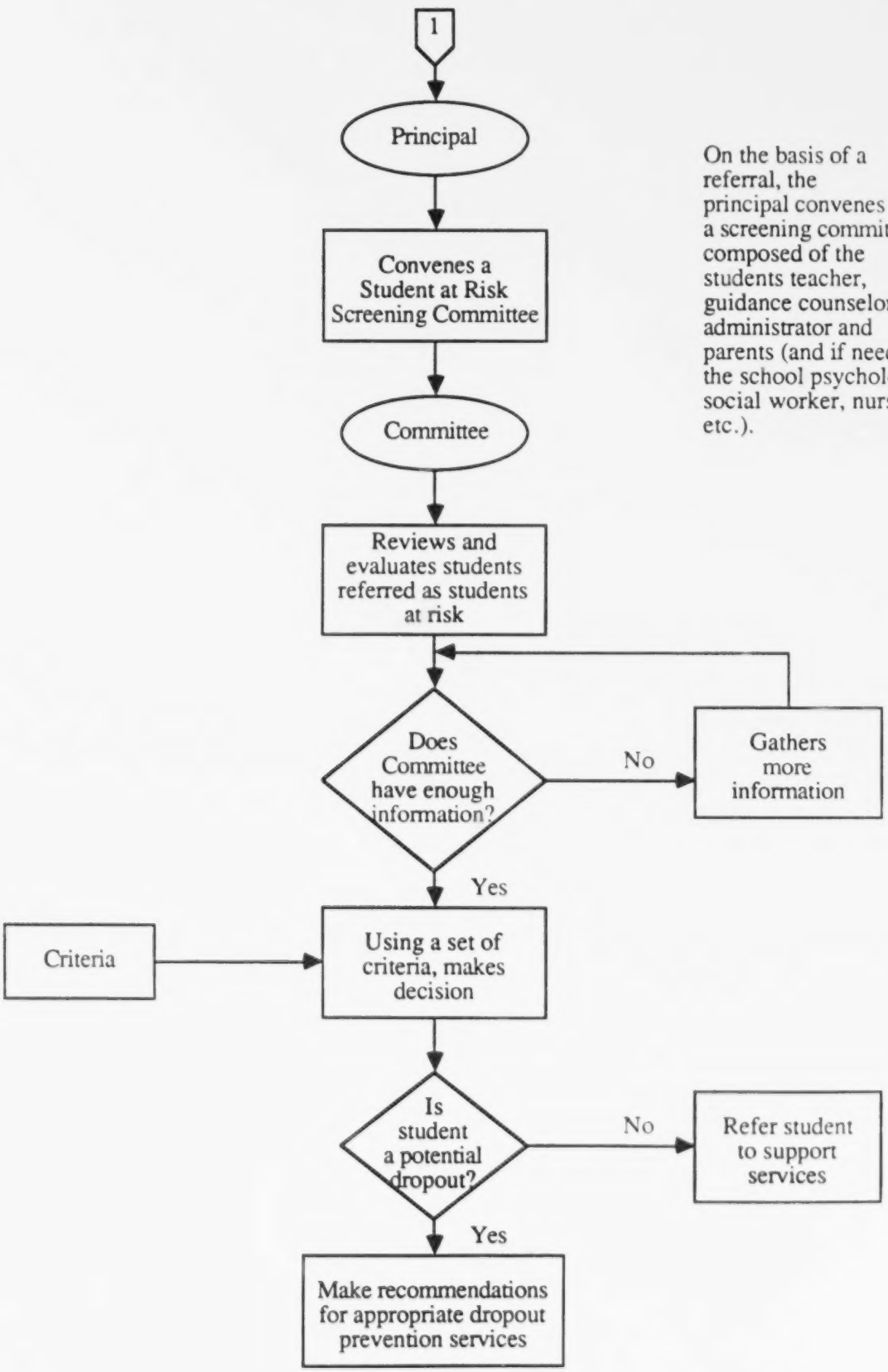
The staffing of the elementary schools with a student advocate will be phased in over a three-year period. In the first year, a student advocate will be assigned to each school with an enrollment of 700 or more (see Exhibit 13 for a list of elementary schools and their corresponding enrollments). In the second year, those schools with enrollments of 500 to 699 will be assigned a student advocate. In the third year of the program, those schools with fewer than 500 students will be assigned a student advocate.

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS AT RISK



Referrals may also be made by a school staff member, community agency staff member or the student him/herself.

SCREENING PROCESS



On the basis of a referral, the principal convenes a screening committee composed of the students teacher, guidance counselor, administrator and parents (and if needed, the school psychologist, social worker, nurse, etc.).

Exhibit 13

ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENT ADVOCATE TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Enrollment	Elementary Schools	Year in which a Student Advocate will be assigned to the school
≥700	Barnard-Brown Burns Clark Fox Elementary Hooker King Parkville SAND Vine Street West Middle	1988/1989
500-699	Betances Fisher Kinsella McDonough Simpson-Waverly Wish	1989/1990
<500	Barbour Batchelder Burr Dwight Kennelly Naylor Rawson Twain Webster	1990/1991

The implications of the identification and screening process for the middle and high schools will be that the current dropout prevention program, Project Bridge (described below), will be expanded in both types of school, both in the number of school staff involved with the program and the number of students enrolled. These changes are also described below.

2. Initiate a process for the referral of students who are potential dropouts to appropriate services and programs within the school system and/or community.

Existing School System Resources

There are several programs in the Hartford Public School System which exist to address various needs of students. Only one program with dropout reduction as its primary purpose serves students identified as highly at risk. This program is Project Bridge.

Project Bridge is a joint venture of the Hartford Public School System and the School/Business Collaborative, a Greater Hartford Chamber of Commerce affiliate composed of corporate representatives and school system staff, as well as representatives of community-based organizations, local foundations, labor unions, and parents groups. Project Bridge was initiated by the staff and administration at Quirk Middle School in 1985 as a pilot project called SAVE. Twenty-five students were enrolled in the program. Upon the successful completion of the first year of SAVE, Project Bridge was inaugurated officially on July 1, 1986. The program currently receives funding from various sources such as Public/Private Ventures, the United States Department of Health and Human Services, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and local corporations. The program has expanded every year, and on July 1, 1987 the Hartford Foundation informed the Chamber of Commerce and the Hartford Public School System that the Foundation was awarding the Chamber of Commerce Foundation $500,000 for the expansion of the Bridge program over a two-year period. One hundred-fifty students were enrolled in the program in September, 1987 - approxi-

mately 100 in the middle schools and 50 in the high schools. Another 100 to 110 students will enter the program at either the beginning of the second marking period (i.e., in November).

Project Bridge is employment-oriented and incentive-based. Participating students are given two strong incentives to remain in school and perform well in the program--early promotion from middle school to high school and placement in a subsidized internship position.

Project Bridge participants enter the program as second marking period seventh-graders. Criteria used to identify participants as students at risk include chronic absenteeism, multiple grade retentions, repeated disciplinary referrals, negative attitudes toward school, low self-esteem, and substandard levels of achievement in basic skills subjects. Approximately 25-30 students at risk are included in each Bridge cycle.

Prior to entering the program, each Bridge participant is asked to sign a contract which outlines the sequence of program activities and describes the incentives offered to students who successfully complete these activities. Each child's parent or guardian is also required to sign a similar contract. These two contracts clearly define the responsibilities of all parties involved in the program. For example, the students commit themselves to attending school every day on time, and parents/guardians commit themselves to helping their children get to school punctually each day.

Upon entering Project Bridge, participants are assigned to a team of two teachers for instruction in five basic subject areas--reading, mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science. Both seventh- and eighth-grade curricular materials and texts are used for instruction in these subjects. The reduced teacher-to-pupil ratio enables the program's teachers to provide individualized instruction, remediation, and attention. The participants'

regular academic coursework is supplemented with pre-employment/life-skills workshops conducted by a Bridge employment specialist. This employment specialist is also available to participating students for one-on-one conferences and individualized career planning.

At the end of the spring semester, Bridge participants who have met or surpassed program objectives are promoted to the ninth grade. Those who have fallen short of the objectives in some way are promoted to the eighth grade, where they remain in the dropout prevention cluster and have another opportunity to qualify for early promotion at the end of the first marking period of the fall semester. After these students are promoted, a new group of 25-30 seventh graders is selected for enrollment in the Bridge program.

At the high school, ninth-grade Bridge participants are scheduled to meet as a group with the Bridge employment specialist and the advancement counselor for one class period each day. During this period, the employment specialist conducts Bridge workshops on pre-employment, work maturity, and life and study skills. The employment specialist and the advancement counselor are also available during the school day for one-on-one conferences. As a familiar and trusted face, the employment specialist provides a sense of continuity to Bridge participants as they make the transition from middle school to the high school environment.

To ensure that the students who remain at the middle or "feeder" school during the first marking period of the fall semester experience no academic disruptions at the time of their promotion to high school, teachers in the drop out prevention cluster use ninth-grade texts and curricular materials for the nine-week period. These teachers, in essence, follow an instructional track parallel to that of their ninth-grade counterparts in the major subject areas. Thus, the students promoted at the end of the first marking period enter their high school classes on a common footing with those who entered the classes in September.

Paid internships are offered to Project Bridge participants on an "as ready" basis. To qualify for internship placement a participant is expected to attend school and program workshops regularly, maintain a level of academic performance consistent with his/her abilities, and demonstrate mastery of basic employability skills. Project Bridge interns are paid a stipend of at least $3.75 per hour for a maximum of 15 hours of work per week at a public or non-profit sector work site. Once students have demonstrated the ability to perform acceptably in a subsidized internship, they can be considered for unsubsidized after-school jobs in the private sector.

The Project Bridge program also involves a summer component. During the months of July and August, Project Bridge students are expected to participate in a half-time work/half-time remediation summer program. The employment specialists who work with the Project Bridge students throughout the school year continue to monitor their progress through the summer.

Hartford's first class of Project Bridge students entered the tenth grade in the fall of 1987. Their daily schedules will be similar to non-Bridge students. However, increased emphasis will be placed on preparation of students to succeed in their junior and senior years without the extensive support services provided by Project Bridge.

Each year, improvements are made to the program. This year those improvements will incorporate changes recommended by concerned parties who met separately at meetings held in June and July of this year: students currently enrolled in the program, teachers in the program, and the principals of the middle and high schools in which the program exists.

Not only will the number of students enrolled in the program increase with the additional spending, but the number of staff persons involved will also increase.

In the middle schools, a full-time counselor and a full-time employment specialist have been identified. In the 1988-1989 academic year a half-time social worker and a half-time outreach worker will also be identified.

In Hartford, the majority of dropouts leave school during their ninth grade year. The creation of additional Project Bridge clusters at the middle school level will enable the Hartford public schools to serve more high risk students before they make the decision to drop out.

In the high schools, the Project Bridge program will be staffed by five full-time teachers (in the areas of English, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies) and a full-time employment specialist. The Project Bridge program will also include a half-time social worker and a half-time outreach worker. As a result of funding from the State and private sector, each high school was assigned an advancement counselor for the 1987-1988 school year.

Project Bridge staff are expected to serve as mentors and role models for the students. The high school Project Bridge staff will be expected to improve the students' self concept as well as their academic performance. In short, the high school Project Bridge staff will form a support network which will not only foster academic growth, but emotional and mental growth as well.

Students will either be promoted to the high school Project Bridge program from the middle school Project Bridge cluster, or will be referred to the program by the high school student at risk screening committee.

Based on the 1985-1986 dropout figures, one can estimate that there will be a need for the Project Bridge program to provide services to 200 students each at Bulkeley and Weaver high schools, and 300 at Hartford Public High School. Furthermore, many of these students will require bilingual services. Because of finan-

cial considerations, the program will be phased in over a three-year period.

There are other programs within the school system to which students will be referred. Some of these are integral school services/activities which may indirectly serve to change a student's behavior or cause him or her to want to stay in school (e.g., involvement in extracurricular activities or successful guidance counseling). Others are programs designed to address certain needs of students and, while not specifically targeting students identified as being at risk of leaving school, usually include students who exhibit one or more of the identifying characteristics.

Examples of some of these programs include:

- School-to-Work Program. Initiated in 1985 as a joint venture between the School/Business Collaborative and the Hartford Public School System, this program provides career assessment, pre-employment training, and referral and placement services to job-seeking members of the senior class. The program also provides internship opportunities enabling students to acquire work experience prior to graduation. This program is staffed by two employment specialists in each of the City's three public high schools and a project manager.

- Teenage Parents Program (TAPP). This program is a multi-faceted alternative education program for students who choose not to remain in their regular school during pregnancy. Enrollees are provided with academic instruction, social service counseling, guidance and health services, as well as parenting and child care instruction. Four days of instruction are scheduled, allowing the fifth day of the week for students to keep medical, welfare, and legal appointments. TAPP also operates an Infant Development Center as part of the Parenting Education Program. The Infant Development Center provides child care for infants of TAPP students and practical experience in child development for students enrolled in the Parenting Education Program.

- Career Beginnings Program. Operated by the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education, Inc., this program helps seniors learn about their opportunities for a college education and about career options. During the summer after junior year, students are placed in jobs in which they work in area business and industry four days per week. Additionally, a summer enrichment program is offered by college staff which includes career, admissions, and financial counseling. Finally, a

series of nine monthly workshops will be held during the academic year, each at a different college. Throughout the year, each student will be helped by an adult "mentor" from the Hartford area. Mentors will encourage students to finish high school, learn about careers, and gain admission to an appropriate college.

- Academic Failures Project. Implemented in 1984, this program serves students who are identified as potential academic failures. The purpose of the program is to identify such students and structure interventions to reduce failures. Students are assigned to tutors (who volunteer) and advisors based upon their academic needs.

Exhibit 14 demonstrates the possible progression of a Bridge student from middle school through high school.

Community Services

There are several community services to which students at risk may also be referred, and the list of available services is constantly expanding. These programs provide training, employment, recreation, and educational opportunities to students.

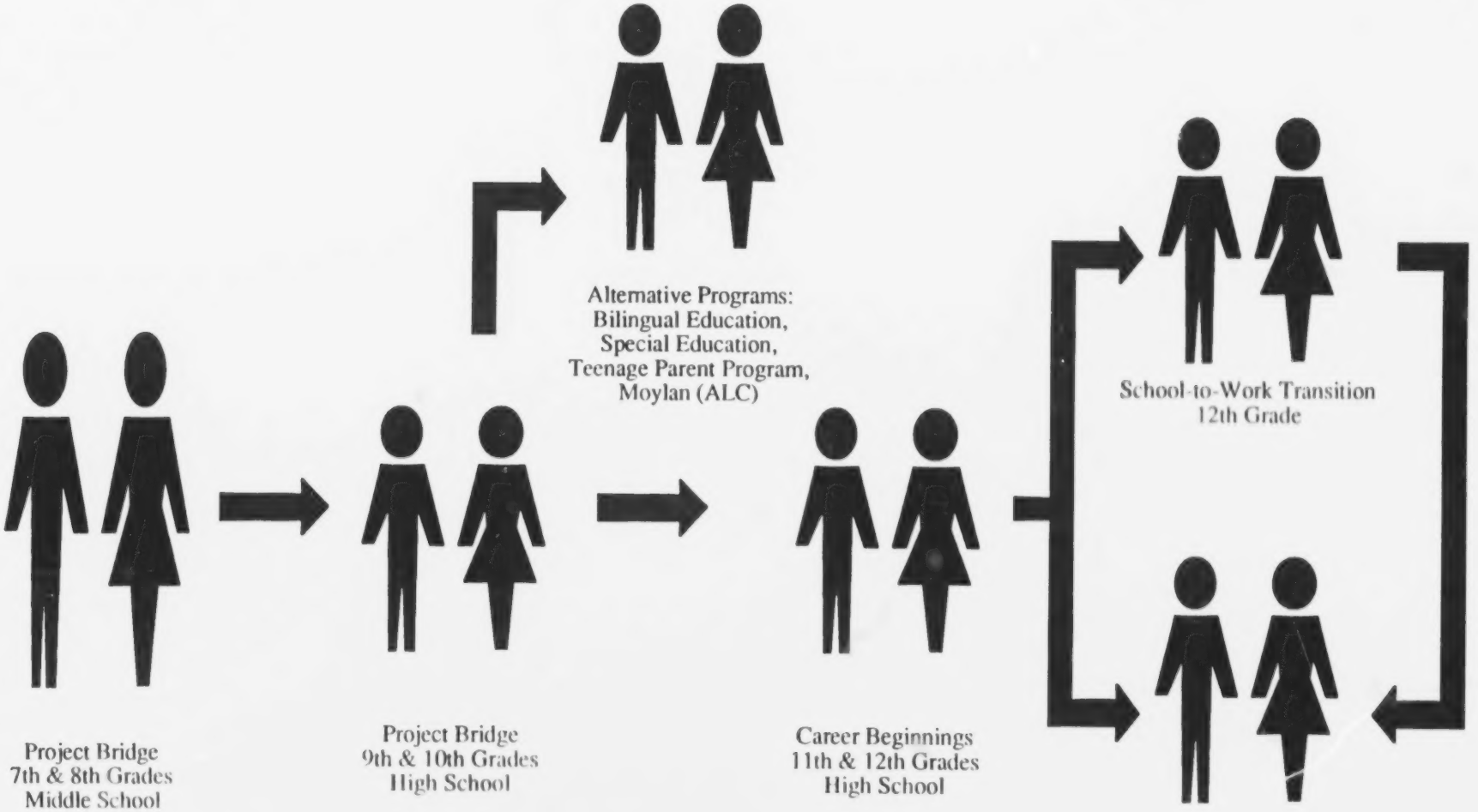
The advancement counselor will be responsible for making students aware of the community agencies that provide these services.

An example of some of these agencies, services and programs are:

- Summer Youth Employment Programs, providing basic education and employment
- Park & Recreation Department, with sports, crafts, and recreation
- Urban League of Greater Hartford, providing job training and placement
- Sacred Heart Church, providing a tutorial service
- Hartford Neighborhood Centers, providing basic education and internships
- National Puerto Rican Forum, providing basic education and bilingual clerical training
- Capitol Region Education Council, providing basic education and internships

Exhibit 14

PROGRESSION OF A BRIDGE STUDENT FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL TO GRADUATION



3. Establish and expand programs to eliminate gaps in services currently available to students at risk. For example, it has been suggested that programs which improve attendance should be incorporated into the schools.

4. Conduct an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of school-based services to identify students at risk. The evaluation design is discussed below.

Objective B

The second objective will incorporate all of the implementation steps of Objective A and will result in the improvement of academic performance and attendance, and a decrease in discipline referrals among students identified as being at risk.

Objective C

The third objective of the dropout plan is to establish a mechanism whereby students who drop out are referred to a community based organization for appropriate services. This objective will be implemented following three steps:

1. Build a network of community agencies, adult education programs, and church organizations which provides services (i.e., education, training and/or employment) to dropouts.

   The dropout prevention counselors in each high school and middle school will be responsible for referring any student who drops out of the school program to an appropriate community-based service. Each school will also send a monthly list of students who dropped out, and the organizations to which they were referred, to the Central Office of Dropout Prevention. The Dropout Prevention Office will attempt to contact each dropout to determine what caused the student to drop out, assess the student's situation, and offer assistance. The Central Office of Dropout Prevention will coordinate its activities with Hartford's Employment Resources Development Agency (ERDA) and the community-based organizations to ensure that school dropouts receive all the appropriate services available.

Site visits on the part of school staff to community agencies would help to strengthen the communication network among services helping dropouts. Another possibility would be the formation of a committee composed of representatives of each community-based program which would meet periodically to discuss relevant issues.

2. Communicate with all dropouts by mail, telephone, or home visit to determine what caused them to drop out, and to apprise them of various educational, training, and employment opportunities in the community.

   Since so many students cannot be located at the end of the year, this will be an ongoing process to track the students identified on the monthly lists of dropouts which the schools will be sending to the Central Office of Dropout Prevention.

3. Document the extent to which dropouts availed themselves of community-based services.

   Through the interaction of the school system and the community-based organizations, which will now occur more formally as described above, representatives from the community-based organizations will work with the school system to identify those dropouts who are utilizing the services available, and those dropouts yet to be reached.

Objective D

The fourth objective is to continue to conduct research to determine the actual reasons for students dropping out of school. The results of the research will be incorporated into any future modifications of the dropout plan. This objective will be implemented as follows:

1. When former students are contacted by mail, telephone, or home visit (as described under Objective C above), they will be interviewed to determine why they dropped out.

2. The data will be analyzed and presented in a statistical report to the Planning Committee, the Board of Education, and other interested parties.

   The survey instruments may be modified and/or expanded as necessary to incorporate responses not already included which seem to correlate with dropping out. The instruments will also be tested to ensure that they meet the reading comprehension level of the respondents. The factors associated with dropping out will be examined and possible implications of the data on the screening process and on programs and services will be determined.

3. Based on the results of the research, modifications may be made to the Student at Risk Program.

   For example, teacher training programs may be revised to reflect changes in or additions to the list of characteristics used for identifying students at risk. Similarly, changes in the screening process or the programs and services may be necessary to reflect information provided by respondents.

Objective E

The fifth and final objective is to establish a Dropout Reduction Task Force which will oversee implementation of all activities adopted in the dropout prevention plan and make periodic progress reports to the Hartford Board of Education. Upon implementation of this plan, the Hartford Dropout Planning Committee will become the Hartford Dropout Reduction Task Force (Collaborative). The Task Force, as in the case with the planning committee, will serve as an advisory committee to the Superintendent of Schools.

The Task Force will serve the following purposes:

- Provide leadership and identification of potential funding and other resources needed to implement the dropout plan.

- Recommend, introduce, and support the adoption of legislation that will facilitate the expansion of services to dropouts and students at risk.

- Formalize the relationship between the school system and the City of Hartford Employment Resource Development Agency (ERDA) to ensure that dropouts are referred to and enrolled in appropriate community based programs.

F. EVALUATION

The evaluation design for the Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction is based on the implementation of the five objectives described above.

Objective A will be evaluated by comparing the dropout rate for the 1988/1989 academic year with the dropout rate for the 1987/1988 school year. A reduction in the dropout rate will be seen as an indication of the successful accomplishment of this objective (product evaluation).

As part of objective A, the identification, referral, and placement process for dropouts will also be evaluated (process evaluation). To determine whether dropouts were successfully identified, a comparison will be made monthly of the list of students who have dropped out and the list of students who were identified to be at risk. If the list of dropouts includes a small (if any) number of students who were not identified to be at risk, the identification process will be seen to be successful. Referral lists will also be examined to see that the complete list of students at risk is receiving appropriate referrals. If the determination is made frequently that students thought to be at risk did not receive referral, yet the student later drops out, modifications will be made to the referral process to increase the number of successful interventions.

The success of Project Bridge may be evaluated by comparing those students identified as being at risk and accepted into the program with those students identified as being at risk but not enrolled in the program due to limited space. Since funding is not available to allow every student to enroll who is identified to be at risk, students will be referred to the program on a space available basis (rolling enrollment) until all spaces are filled. At the end of the

year, the dropout rates of the two groups (those participating in the program and those identified to be at risk but unable to participate because of limited space) will be compared for an indication that the dropout rate of the former group is smaller than that of the latter group.

Statistical methods exist which will allow the analysis of the difference between the group of service recipients and its non-equivalent control group, controlling for some of the factors which cause the latter group to be non-equivalent (e.g., there may be something different about the students identified as being at risk early in the year, making them more likely to be admitted to the program, and those identified later in the year).

Students identified as being at risk will also be surveyed to determine the appropriateness and quality of services provided to them.

Whether the gap of services available is adequately filled will be evaluated by examining the number of students for whom no appropriate program exists.

In the evaluation of Objective B, additional statistics will be collected to determine if there were any other gains realized by the potential dropouts as a result of being in the program. The additional statistics will include attendance figures, test scores, grades, scores on instruments designed to measure self esteem or social isolation, etc.

Objective C focuses on the dropout and his or her referral to community organizations. A comparison will be made of the number of students who are successfully referred to a community agency for follow-up services. Statistics will be reported as to the number of dropouts who are contacted by mail, telephone, or home visit to apprise them of the various educational and employment opportunities available to them. The goal will be to increase the percentage of dropouts contacted monthly on the basis of the lists provided to the Central Office of Dropout Reduction.

The evaluation of Objective D is based on whether efforts continue monthly to contact and interview former dropouts. Furthermore, reports summarizing the findings and analyses should be made at least annually to the Task Force and the Hartford Board of Education.

The primary evaluation of Objective E focuses on whether the Hartford Dropout Planning Committee becomes the Hartford Dropout Reduction Task Force and submits at least one progress report annually to the Superintendent of Schools regarding the Dropout Reduction Program.

As part of the evaluation of Objective E, a determination will be made as to whether or not the Task Force has formalized the relationship between the school system and the City of Hartford Employment Resources Development Agency (ERDA) to ensure that dropouts are referred to an appropriate community based program.

G. BUDGET

The budget for the Hartford Community Plan for Dropout Reduction is included as Exhibit 15.

HARTFORD DROPOUT REDUCTION BUDGET
1988-1989

Positions	Currently in Gen. Budget	Currently in EEA	Proposed Additions to Gen. Budget	State D.O. Funds	Private Funding		Total
					Existing Funding	Additional Funding	
Central Office:							
(1) Assist. Coordinator		51,300					51,300
(2) Secretary			16,200				16,200
Bulkeley High School:							
(4) Subject Teachers	47,306		47,306				94,612
(1) Reading Teacher			23,653				23,653
(1) Counselor				33,695			33,695
(.5) Social Worker			16,848				16,848
(1) Empl. Specialist					12,500	12,500	25,000
(.5) Outreach Worker			10,000				10,000
HPHS:							
(4) Subject Teachers	47,306		47,306				94,612
(1) Reading Teacher			23,653				23,653
(1) Counselor					33,695		33,695
(.5) Social Worker			16,848				16,848
(1) Empl. Specialist					12,500	12,500	25,000
(.5) Outreach Worker			10,000				10,000
Weaver High School:							
(4) Subject Teachers	47,306		47,306				94,612
(1) Reading Teacher			23,653				23,653
(1) Counselor				33,695			33,695
(.5) Social Worker			16,848				16,848
(1) Empl. Specialist					12,500	12,500	25,000
(.5) Outreach Worker			10,000				10,000
Quirk Middle School:							
(4) Subject Teachers	94,612						94,612
(1) Counselor	33,695						33,695
(.5) Social Worker (Bil.)			16,848				16,848
(1) Empl. Specialist					12,500	12,500	25,000
(.5) Outreach Worker			10,000				10,000

HARTFORD DROPOUT REDUCTION BUDGET
1988-1989

Positions	Currently in Gen. Budget	Currently in EEA	Proposed Additions to Gen. Budget	State D.O. Funds	Private Funding: Existing Funding	Private Funding: Additional Funding	Total
Fox Middle School:							
(4) Subject Teachers	82,786		11,826				94,612
(1) Counselor	33,695						33,695
(.5) Social Worker			16,848				16,848
(1) Empl. Specialist					12,500	12,500	25,000
(.5) Outreach Worker			10,000				10,000
Bulkeley Feeder:							
(4) Subject Teachers	23,653		70,959				94,612
(1) Counselor	33,695						33,695
(.5) Social Worker			16,848				16,848
(1) Empl. Specialist					12,500	12,500	25,000
(.5) Outreach Worker			10,000				10,000
Elementary Schools:							
(10) Student Advocates			168,475	168,475			336,950
Evaluation						25,000	25,000
TOTALS	444,054	51,300	641,425	235,865	108,695	100,000	1,581,339

Teachers - 23,653
Counselors - 33,695
Social Workers - 33,695
Empl. Specialist - 25,000
Outreach Worker - 20,000

This budget will service in the Elementary Schools (K - 6) -- 1,500 students; in the Middle Schools (7 - 8) -- 150 students; and in the High Schools (9 - 10) -- 375 students. During the first year of the program, 2,025 students will be served.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire Letter Sent to Students

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Herman LaFontaine
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Student,

The Hartford Board of Education has compiled a list of students who dropped out of school in 1986-87. Your name appeared on that list and we are concerned that you may not be receiving the benefits of all the community services available.

If you need help to return to school or a list of community services, please feel free to contact me: Ms. Antres V. Buford, Ass't Coordinator for Dropout Prevention. Telephone: 722-8713

I would like you to complete the survey below indicating why you dropped out of school.

APPROVED: _____
DINO GALIANO

Sincerely yours,

Antres Buford
Ass't Coordinator
Dropout Prevention

AB/mb

- -

SURVEY

Please check off all appropriate reasons for leaving school early. If not listed, write in your reason at the bottom of the survey.

Return to: Ms. Antres V. Buford
Guidance & Health Services
Hartford Board of Education
249 High Street
Hartford, CT 06103

_____ 1. Dissatisfied with teachers
_____ 2. Dislike of school in general
_____ 3. Lack of Credits
_____ 4. Dislike school last attended
_____ 5. Boredom/lack of interest
_____ 6. Pregnancy
_____ 7. Deisre for alternative Educ.
_____ 8. Moved to another city or stat
_____ 9. Marriage
_____ 10. Need a job/work
_____ 11. Needed to help at home
_____ 12. Other (write in reason(s))

La Junta de Educación tiene una lista de estudiantes que han dejado de asistir a la escuela en el año escolar de 1986-87 y en el presente año escolar. Como tu nombre aparece en la lista, nos preocupa el hecho de que no estés recibiendo los beneficios de los diferentes servicios de la comunidad disponibles en estos casos.

Si tu decides regresar a la escuela y necesitas ayuda o si tu necesitas una lista de los servicios disponibles, siéntete en la completa libertad de ponerte en contacto conmigo, la Sra. Antres V. Buford, Asistente Coordinadora para la Prevención de la Deserción Escolar, al teléfono: 722-8713.

Me gustaría que tú tomes tiempo para llenar la encuesta incluída abajo y pongas la razón por la cual dejaste de asistir a la escuela.

Sinceramente,

Antres V. Buford
Asistente Coordinadora
para la Prevención
de la Deserción Escolar

AB/mb

- - - -

APPENDIX B

List of Other Responses to Questionnaire Letter

OTHER REASONS

1. "Had a back operation, too much to climb the stairs and carry my books."
2. "Taking mother to her appointments."
3. "Dissatisfaction with the Guidance Department."
4. "Problems at home and with my boyfriend, I was pregnant."
5. "Had to pay child support."
6. "My reason for leaving school early, is that I had to support myself."
7. "Ran with wrong crowd, but with the help of my father, I was able to return to Hartford Public High School this year."
8. "I was stupid to quit school."
9. "Mom is bugging me to get a job."
10. Dissatisfaction with the school their son was attending, caused him to drop out.
11. "Need to get my own apartment due to problems at home."
12. "School wasn't fun anymore."
13. "The state didn't want to help my mother, so I had to find a job to help in the house, so the only thing I could have done was to drop out of school."
14. "Too many problems at home."
    1. Financial problems
    2. Lack of encouragement from parents.
15. Her mother died on April 23, so she dropped out.
16. "I had many problems and it was difficult to concentrate."
17. "I wish to have a job and go to school."
18. "Got caught smoking drugs."

APPENDIX C

Student Referral Forms

DROPOUT PREVENTION

STUDENT AT RISK REFERRAL

CASE DATA SHEET

TO BE COMPLETED:

NAME _____ HOME ROOM _____ BIRTHDATE _____

ADDRESS _____ PHONE _____

REASON FOR REFERRAL _____

_____

_____

_____

COMMENTS:

_____
SIGNATURE

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

RESOURCES UTILIZED:

1. Previously evaluated by the School Psychology Department? Yes _____ No _____
   Findings:

2. Has been or is being seen by an outside agency? Yes _____ No _____
   If yes, indicate agency _____

3. School Program (circle one): Regular Spec. Ed. Bilingual Remedial

GRADES:

TEST DATA:

HEALTH COMMENTS:

School _____
Date _____

STUDENT AT RISK
CASE INTERVENTION REPORT
SCREENING COMMITTEE CONFERENCE

TO: SCREENING COMMITTEE _____

VIA: _____, Principal

FROM: _____, Vice Principal

RE: Case Intervention

Referrals to Screening Committee:

NAME/STUDENT NUMBER	BIRTHDATE	HOMEROOM	PROGRAM	INTERVENTION

Dropouts (not previously referred to the screening committee):

NAME/STUDENT NUMBER	BIRTHDATE	HOMEROOM	PROGRAM	INTERVENTION/ STUDENT PLANS

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RECORDER AT THE SCREENING COMMITTEE

DATE _____ _____
RECORDER

DISCUSSION:

INTERVENTION AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS:

FOLLOW-UP:

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

DATE _____ _____
RECORDER

DISCUSSION:

INTERVENTION AND/OR RECOMMENDATIONS:

FOLLOW-UP:

SCHOOL _____

REFERRAL LOG

STUDENT NAME	I. D. NUMBER	REFERRED DATE	REFERRED BY	INTERVENTION	OUTCOME	RECOMMENDATION

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